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SECRET/EXDIS/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON

INR WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS
OF DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS
No. 106, May 18, 1979

TRANSFERRED/RECOMMEND RELEASE
CONCURRENCE REQUESTED - CIA

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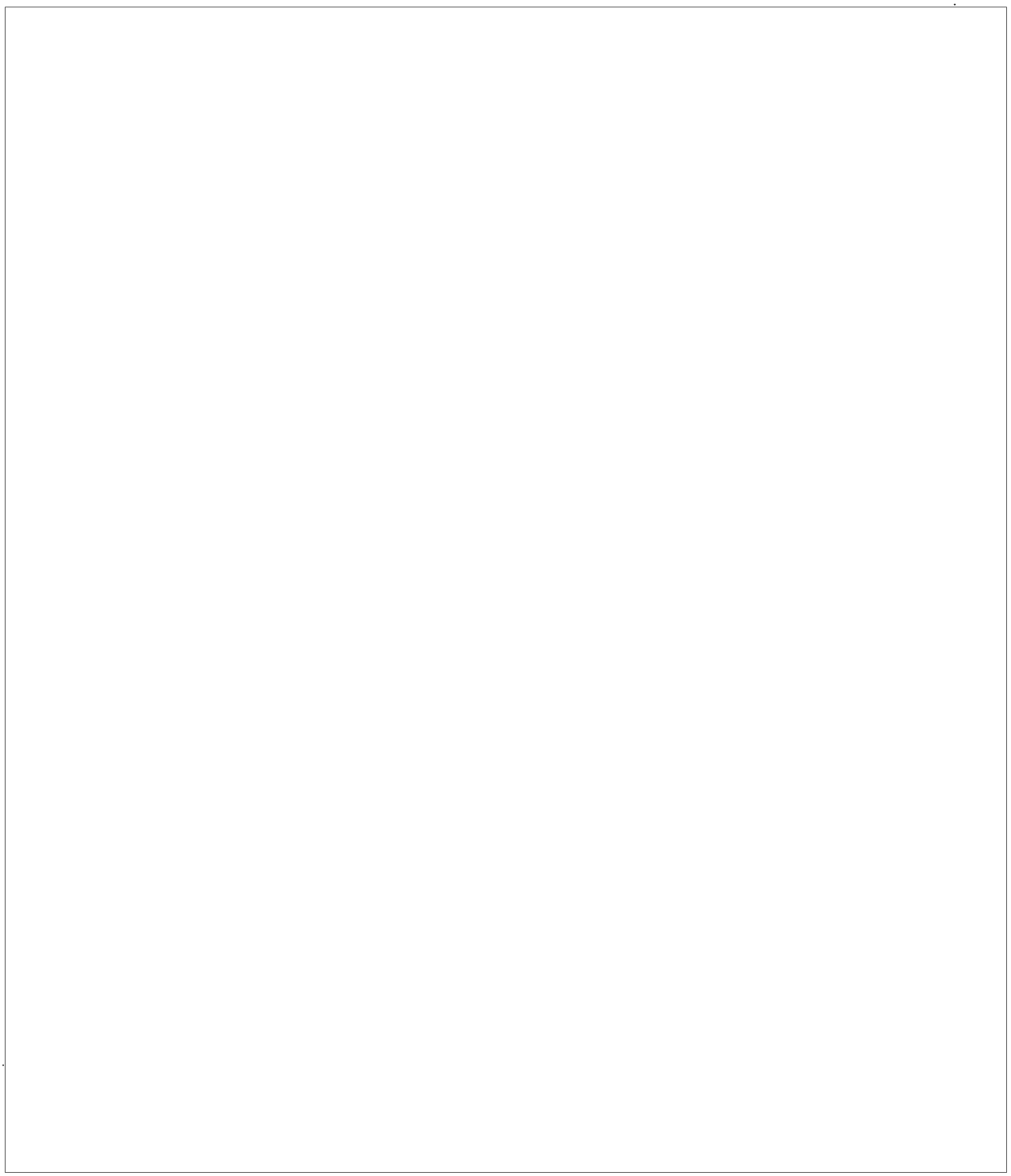

Argentina

Broaching the "Disappeareds" Problem. The Argentine government is compiling information on persons who have

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allegedly disappeared in the political violence of recent years, according to knowledgeable Argentine military sources. The effort apparently began about a month ago on orders that reportedly came "from the top."

Representatives of the Army and Navy told a visting US Army officer that:

--information gathered from subordinate units with security responsibilities is being compared with central police, military, and government files to determine whether alleged "disappeareds" are dead, jailed, or missing (no information); and

--the most difficult problem is posed by cases wherein persons killed in combat operations were either unidentifiable or carrying one or more false identification documents.

An Army intelligence source confirmed to an Embassy officer that research on the "disappeareds" issue is under way. He noted that while the government has lists of dead terrorists, there are many cases that remain unexplained. In recent weeks, intelligence officers have been contacting families of the "disappeared" in search of information that might clarify specific incidents, but the results have been limited. According to the intelligence officer, security units have apparently destroyed records that would link them to disappearance cases.

A reported comment by former Corps I Commander Major General Suarez Mason concerning death warrants that he had signed leads our Embassy to believe that extensive records do, or at least did at one time, exist. In the Embassy's judgment, however, such records as may exist will never be revealed. (CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN IR6 804 0093 79 May 9; CONFIDENTIAL Buenos Aires 3757, May 10)

INR Comment: The Argentine government has not been responsive on the "disappeareds" issue. There has been no massive public demand for an official accounting, and government leaders have often rationalized their position with the argument that it is better to leave the past behind and concentrate on reconstructing the country. There are indications however, that the governing junta and President Videla may have concluded that an accounting--however partial--will have to be rendered eventually, and that it is best to undertake the job while the armed forces are firmly in control. (CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN)

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IAHRC Visit on Track. The Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC) will proceed with its visit to Argentina following the election of new members of the Special General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) on May 22. We have also learned that the Commission is satisfied that the Argentine mission to the OAS is giving its full cooperation. The Argentine mission has stated that it is authorized to accept any date for the visit selected by the IAHRC. (CONFIDENTIAL, State 118291, May 10)

INR Comment: The visit was originally scheduled for May 28 through June 9. Despite fears in some quarters, it is not likely that the Argentines will use the election of new IAHRC members as a pretext to seek a postponement of the on site investigation of human conditions in Argentina. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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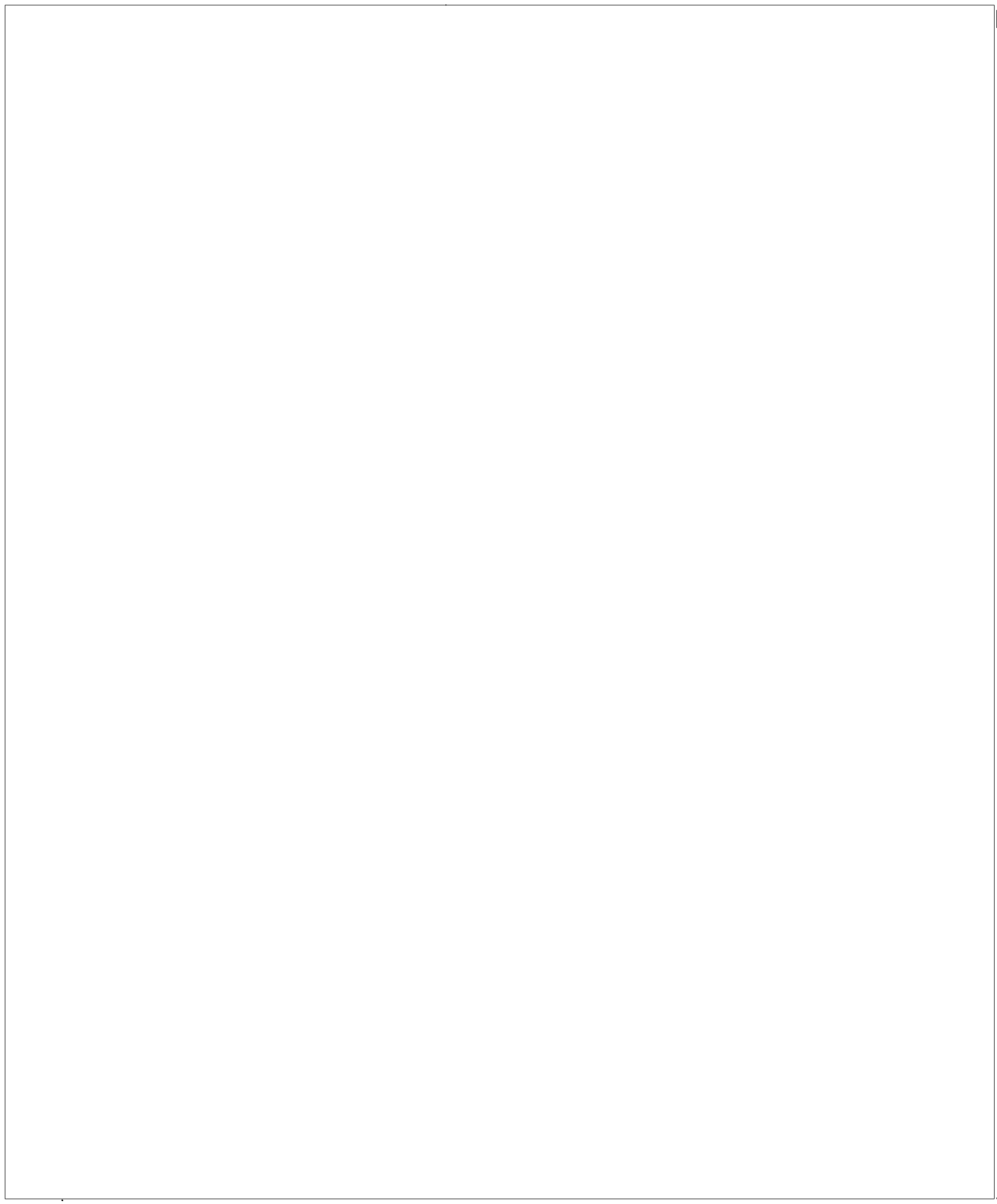

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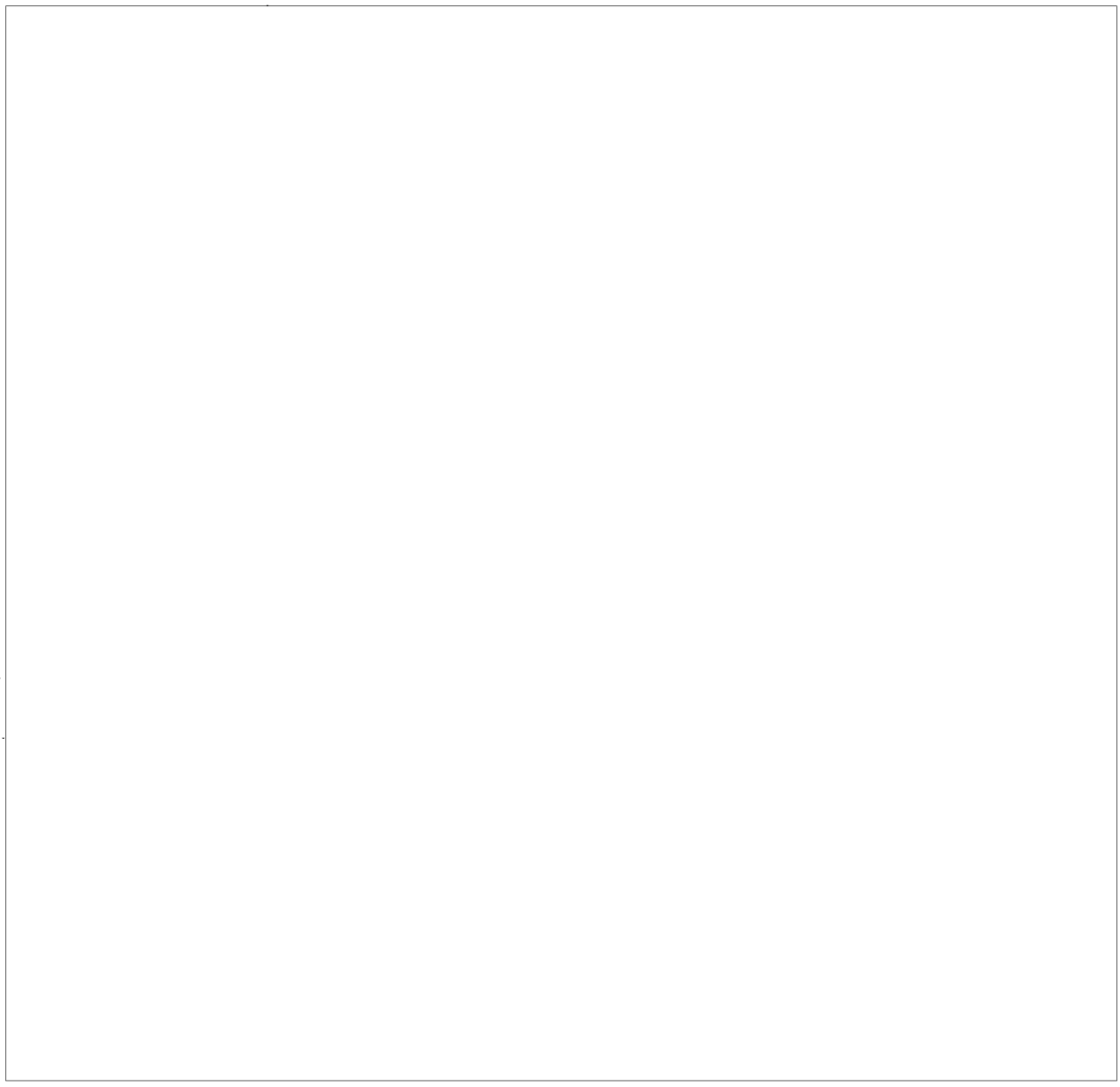

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